

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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March 1, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: NSCIC

*Only Martelli
to Don Burton*

*THERE ARE
MORE STUDIES
THAN THIS*

I do not consider the net efforts of the NSCIC's Working Group to be entirely satisfactory. After more than a year in existence only three studies have been completed, one more is nearing completion, one has been cancelled, and one has gone virtually nowhere despite four months of work. None of the studies have been discussed by the Principals, and the Working Group itself has scrupulously avoided discussing the issue of guidance that could be given to the DCI on intelligence support to policymakers. The quality of work in the studies has been mixed. Those with aggressive team heads have presented perceptive analyses of how the community functions. Others have suffered from lack of analysis, team members unwilling (or unable) to take time to do the work, and heavy reliance on my staff for asking the critical questions. Also, the general thrust of the studies' conclusions have been on local management and analytical problems in intelligence which do not require the attention of NSCIC Principals. Larger issues have surfaced infrequently, mostly at my initiative.

These problems are attributable to a number of factors.

-- Producers dominate the Working Group and the study teams, but seem generally unable to criticize themselves. In some cases this results from too many years within intelligence; in others it comes from an apprehension about criticizing one's organization, an inability to conduct real in-depth evaluations, or too many other demands on team member's time.

-- Members of the Working Group, in the absence of interest from the Principals, have not aggressively pursued their tasks. With the exception of some ASDI and PRG work, they have been assigned to intelligence teams and placed under their

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guidance. Having done this, support for the effort by Working Group members has languished. My criticism of this lack of support to various members has resulted in much jawboning but little action.

-- The review effort -- and the basic tasks of the NSCIC -- may be too demanding in some cases to be handled by part-time interagency groups of analysts. Reviewing intelligence functions requires an inquisitiveness, perceptiveness, and willingness to dig that may be beyond some individuals and impossible in the organizational environment of an interagency part-time group. Finding the critical question in which decisionmakers are really interested may also be too abstract for analysts who have years of experience in dealing with more concrete issues.

-- The Principals have not supported the effort. While I think it is unrealistic to expect great involvement by the Principals, the unavailability of Kissinger and the absence of NSCIC meetings (only one to date) have definitely influenced the vigor of the Working Group. Also, the DCI has not availed himself of the opportunity as a Principal to informally encourage the Working Group.

-- The Working Group has been dominated by CIA. Much to my concern, studies have been informally staffed through CIA -- either by teams or by the DCI staff -- before being released to me or to other Working Group members. CIA personnel and DCI people with CIA backgrounds have nearly outnumbered other participants at meetings. Their combined experience and resistance have made constructive discussion difficult without detracting from the collegial atmosphere of the meetings, which few people have been willing to risk.

The Job of the Working Group

The Working Group, in my opinion, is virtually the NSCIC. The Principals have only met once and in reality are too busy with other tasks within their respective organizations to do more than hold symbolic meetings and pass on recommendations made by the Working

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Group. Perhaps a change in activity by the Principals will occur in the future - certainly I hope to increase Kissinger's role in the coming months - but for the present, the Working Group needs to see its role as far greater than it has been willing to accept so far. Giving guidance, for example, has been avoided as being a task unique to the Principals; the Working Group should be recommending the guidance for the Principals to discuss and to pass to the DCI.

The Working Group has two basic functions:

- To provide the Principals with recommendations that enable them to give the DCI guidance as to the substantive intelligence needs of top-level policymakers.

- To carry out, or to cause to be carried out, a continuing review of the substantive intelligence products and intelligence support provided to top-level consumers.

In carrying out these tasks, the Working Group naturally surfaces other issues which can be communicated informally directly to the DCI or more formally through the Principals.

Considering past problems and the tasks being faced, changes could be instituted in three aspects of the Working Group's operation:

- Personnel

- Work Procedures

- Work Focus

Changes in Personnel

Antidotes are needed for the roles of CIA and other producers and for the lack of active participation by consumers such as the JCS and Department of Justice. Some changes are being instituted simply by the change in personnel and direction produced by Schlesinger's taking over. Others include:

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-- Membership in meetings could be restricted to decrease the number of CIA personnel attending.

-- Separate sub-groups of producers and consumers could be formed to discuss problems free from the influence of each other.

-- JCS and Justice could be encouraged to participate more actively or withdraw from sessions. In particular, the JCS should take a more active role.

-- Other organizations should be invited to participate in relevant discussions -- i.e., NSC staff members, Treasury and Commerce participants.

-- Consultants may be employed to conduct evaluations and to assist in recommending changes.

-- Lower-level working groups could be formed for some problems. For example, branch or area heads and analysts from different agencies could hold conferences to discuss problems and make recommendations.

The preeminent role of the intelligence producer may really be unavoidable. Non-intelligence personnel and organizations are unwilling to participate fully because of indifference, lack of expertise and willingness to defer to intelligence. The agencies, on the other hand, do have the monopoly on knowledge and a vested interest to commit personnel.

Changes in Work Procedures

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The Working Group has met less than half a dozen times since its inception. Its approach has been to develop some ideas for study efforts in order to examine certain types of intelligence support. For example, to review intelligence support to policymakers during crises, studies have been conducted of the Indo-Pakistani, Arab-Israeli Ceasefire and Jordanian Crisis. Each study is then assigned to a team of interagency participants, usually people involved in the issue at the

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time, who prepare the report under the supervision of the Net Assessment Group. Conducting the study requires extensive interviewing, reading past intelligence products and drafting several detailed papers. The project competes for team member's time with his other daily departmental work. The final paper is forwarded by the NAG to the DCI/PRG (General Thomas) who distributed it to the members of the Working Group.

Disadvantages to this approach have already been pointed out. Some can be dealt with:

--- Meetings of the Working Group should be held at scheduled intervals, preferably at least monthly. Having scheduled meetings will increase the pace of the action and will provide more impetus to become involved. Meetings of the sub-groups should also be held frequently, but as necessary.

-- The membership and work procedure of study teams should be altered. Several alternatives can be discussed or tested.

1. The DCI staff should have a full-time section to study some intelligence issues, either independently or as team leaders of interagency groups.
2. Agencies who chair studies should be held responsible to the Working Group for the work.
3. The Working Group should exert more control over selecting personnel for study teams. Study members should have sufficient time to work on them, and those members "close to" the topic should be balanced by more "neutral" participants.

-- Depending upon the topic, the Working Group should exert more day-to-day control over the effort. For example, rather than accepting a finished document, the Working

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Group may require review of the TOR, background data, initial conclusions and final recommendations of some studies.

-- Consultants should be used more frequently to tap outside expertise vis-a-vis certain geographic areas or management problems.

-- Instead of study teams, the Working Group may want to bring together different analysts and managers to discuss known problems and possible solutions.

Changing the Focus

The Working Group has devoted its effort to date to three studies evaluating the intelligence support during a crisis, one of support to a NSSM and one of intelligence production on Yugoslavia. The viewpoint of these works has been the evaluation of support and the identification of problems in internal intelligence management. Little attention has been given to the important task of developing guidance to the community as to the top-level policymakers' intelligence needs.

In the future, both the Working Group and the study teams should devote effort equally between the evaluation and guidance tasks. Perhaps this could be done in stages, as described in a previous paragraph, or the DCI's staff could propose guidance for discussion in Working Group meetings.

The projects which the Working Group takes on in the future should be discussed by the membership at the earliest possible moment. I have several preferences for the near future:

-- Assemble the three studies of crisis support and recommendations for guidance for transmittal to the Principals. Guidance in this case will largely be focused on solutions to structural and communication problems.

-- Initiate a recurring effort (perhaps a standing subcommittee) to identify the three to five major topics of probable interest to policymakers over the next six months.

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-- Detailed specification of terms of reference for NIE's or other special DCI national intelligence products should be formulated. Possibly the NSCIC should review and issue these.

✓ | -- Begin a long-term effort based upon Helms' Planning Guidance to identify policymakers' needs in outyears.

With the completion of the crisis studies, the Working Group could turn its attention to any one of a variety of topics.

-- A review of products such as NIE's, NSSM support, economic intelligence reports, or current daily intelligence production.

-- A review of intelligence support with respect to a given nation or group of nations.

-- Studies of special problems highlighted by the crisis and other studies (e.g., logistics methodology, PRC missile estimates, use of unclassified material). Of special importance may be studies of ~~communications problems~~, the details of which cannot be effectively understood by the sorts of retrospective studies undertaken thus far.

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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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19 February 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Critique of Helms Planning Guidance

GENERAL COMMENTS

I have decided not to forward the document to Kissinger except possibly for information purposes. A review of the paper, either by the NSCIC or through a Kissinger response, would be unfair to you as the new DCI. Helms issued the Planning Guidance only a few days before his departure.

In contrast to the NIPM, my view of the Planning Guidance is somewhat more favorable. I believe that something like the Planning Guidance would be quite useful, especially if it focused on providing a context within which intelligence community planners could address their longer-term programming problems. Thus, it should be focused on a time period beginning about three years in the future and cover a period of about five years. DCI guidance for the next two years ought to be more specific, directive, and program-oriented. Probably it should be issued in a separate document as suggested in an earlier piece given to the DCI.

Future documents should contain three discrete sections:

-- An environmental analysis which encompasses both (a) the trends that influence top-level policy problems and demands for intelligence, and, (b) the trends which affect the functioning and performance of the intelligence community.

-- A section summing up major policy issues and problems that intelligence will have to deal with in the future.

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-- The presentation of general guidance to the community as a whole and more specific guidance to individual agencies as necessary. Guidance could be confined to only those areas where clear trends were discernible, or to specific, important areas that managers should pay special attention to, even if trends are uncertain.

Common to all sections must be the clear identification of key assumptions employed, the evidence of careful analytical thought, and the investigation of alternative ways in which the environment may develop. Too much of the present document reflects a "single view" of the future. It repeats current standard clichés about major trends, and tends to reflect the attitude that present actions are foreclosing the possibility of any real major problems. Subsequent paragraphs of this memorandum give a critique of the present guidance document based upon this three-part view.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS (Part II of the Planning Guidance: "The World Intelligence Environment of the 1970's")

Paragraph 5 suggests that for some obscure reason an environmental analysis is unnecessary. Subsequent paragraphs suggest that the community has no better sense of what may happen in the future than most laymen. Paragraph 5 also contends that U.S. policy interests change slowly. I would suggest that the intelligence community has not shown a high level of understanding of what U.S. policy interests are now, thus intelligence should not summarily dismiss examining future U.S. policy by assuming a slow rate of change. Future U.S. policies are more uncertain than that. Furthermore, simply to predict major policy trends does not provide guidance to intelligence managers.

Issues and trends which are discussed are primarily extrapolations of present issues or problems and reflect the influence of the President's November 5, 1971 memorandum, obvious present day problems and the frequent critical comments which have been made about the community's work. No rigorous search was apparently made to determine if such extrapolations were legitimate, to speculate on other issues which have not yet surfaced, or to examine issues beyond the superficial level at which they are generally discussed today.

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In analyzing the direct influence of environmental trends on the functioning of the community, the Planning Guidance contributes very little. The level funding concept is again surfaced, which I feel is very unrealistic (as the sole DCI instrument) considering the absence of evidence that managers are productivity oriented and their problem of relating costs to output. Also, one does not sense that there has been a careful systematic assessment of the impact of changing technology on the community itself. When the matter is brought up, as in the case of FROSTING, it is cast as a question of preventing an influx of new information from overloading the established framework for handling the information. The notion of exploiting available technology to allow timely processing of all the new information does not come up. The attitude seems to be that changing technology may put a strain on business as usual and thus should be kept under careful wraps.

PROBLEMS FACING INTELLIGENCE (Part III of the Planning Guidance:
"Primary Intelligence Problems")

Following an environmental analysis, the Planning Guidance should call attention to key demands placed on intelligence, both in old and new areas. However, as with the memorandum's approach to the environment, it addresses the major trends as an extrapolation of the present ones. The future is far too uncertain to perform such a straightforward analysis. Some of the problems which are presented also require more examination, asking some searching questions about why the problems are important and what reasonable expectations intelligence has in dealing with them.

Paragraph 12's discussion of the Middle East illustrates the lack of depth in analysis or in diagnosis of future problems. The energy crisis implications neglect the likely impact on the incentives and behavior of major international actors. The energy crisis may provoke military conflicts, coups and other unrest in the Middle East. Japan may be driven closer to the USSR or China.

The treatment of warning in paragraphs 27, 28 and 29 is unsatisfactory. One cannot talk usefully in so general a way about warning, or even about warning of strategic attack. With regard to strategic attack it makes a difference as to how early the warning is and what kinds of warning you are going to provide. The fact is that we have been trying to design our

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strategic forces so that they will survive even in the case of surprise. We have done relatively little, although we should undoubtedly do more, to allow us to take advantage of warning of an attack on the U.S. In terms of protecting our population, we have foregone providing civil defense. If one is considering warning of sufficient timeliness and accuracy to support a U.S. first strike, we need to assess both the feasibility and resources required to do so. The importance of the warning problem is one of the clichés of the intelligence community. We need to ask more searching questions of what the leaders want to be warned about and what in fact would be the use of warning. What sorts of and how much warning are possible? Moreover, it would seem to me as far as warning is concerned that it is important to focus on other types of alert than strategic, e. g., warning of a Sino-Soviet war, warning of major crisis, etc.

The drive to prevent "technological surprise" (paragraphs 30-32) concerns me. There is a reasonable limit to our ability to detect innovations, but intelligence has not attempted to assess this. We have also done little to determine what technological surprise is really critical to detect. For example, we have categorized the importance of different types of information about weapons systems, but in a field like ICBMs, our philosophy seems to be to collect everything possible. Considering the cost of collection, I think intelligence has to ask some hard questions like: How accurate must our CEP predictions be? It is difficult to state what is important unless there is some better picture of what U.S. strategy in U.S. -Soviet technological competition is.

GENERAL AND SPECIFIC GUIDANCE (Part IV of the Planning Guidance: "Implications for Intelligence Functions")

The guidance portion of the document lacks the depth of analysis and level of specificity necessary to alert managers to the need to take action. While I realize that the DCI cannot be very specific in giving guidance to program managers for a period so far in the future, the present document communicates such broad generalities that it can be dismissed as advocating what is already being done. Guidance should include a general commentary about intelligence tasks community wide and a set of specific instructions to subordinate organizations. In addition to the changes in mission necessitated by changes in the environment and consumer demand, attention should be given to changes required by organizational pressures such as personnel and budgeting problems, collection system costs and mission conflicts among agencies.